

**TRANSCRIPT OF INTERVIEW
OF
ANTHONY J. RINKUS**

**10 PAGES
(INCLUDING COVER)**

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

In the Matter of: *

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FIRE ON BOARD THE *

U.S. PASSENGER VESSEL *

PORT IMPERIAL MANHATTAN *

NOVEMBER 17, 2000 *

Monday,
November 20, 2000

INTERVIEW OF:

ANTHONY J. RINKUS

This interview was conducted by Donald J. Tyrrell,
Investigator-in-Charge, National Transportation Safety Board,
Office of Marine Safety, 490 L'Enfant Plaza East, Washington,
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MR. TYRRELL: Okay. You are on.

CAPTAIN RINKUS: Whatever can I do for you,
guys?

MR. TYRRELL: Can you give me your full name?

CAPTAIN RINKUS: My name is Anthony J. Rinkus.
R-I-N-K-U-S.

MR. TYRRELL: K-U-S, okay.

CAPTAIN RINKUS: Yes, sir.

MR. TYRRELL: And you are current position
with the company?

CAPTAIN RINKUS: I am a captain with the New
York Waterway.

MR. TYRRELL: And which vessel are you master
of?

CAPTAIN RINKUS: All of them.

MR. TYRRELL: You don't have one that is
regularly assigned to you?

CAPTAIN RINKUS: At the present time, yes, the
Charles Lindbergh. It is a crew boat. And that
changes from time to time. But, that is basically my
normal boat.

MR. TYRRELL: Okay. What size vessel is
that?

CAPTAIN RINKUS: Seventy five foot, 80 foot.

1 MR. TYRRELL: Okay. How long have you worked
2 for the company?

3 CAPTAIN RINKUS: Over 10 years, 10 years, two
4 months.

5 MR. TYRRELL: Okay. Do you have a Coast
6 Guard?

7 CAPTAIN RINKUS: Yes, sir, I have a 500
8 hundred ton master, near coastal, 1600 ton inland mate.

9 MR. TYRRELL: Okay. How long have you had
10 the master license?

11 CAPTAIN RINKUS: Fifteen years. And I had my
12 inland for five, seven years before that, just under 10
13 before that, and, you know, I was keeping them both up
14 and the guy said you don't have to do this. This one
15 precedes that one, so, you know.

16 MR. TYRRELL: Okay. Can you tell me how you
17 conduct your drills on your vessels and what drills you
18 conduct and, you know, how often and that sort of
19 thing?

20 CAPTAIN RINKUS: I conduct man overboard
21 drills, I conduct fire drills, and what I do is I will
22 take the deck hands and go down, show them what valves
23 need to be open, closed, whatever, and you know,
24 stretch out hose, shoot the, turn on the fire pumps,
25 shoot the water overboard, and shut it down, close

1 valves, wrap everything up, you know, and secured.

2 Man overboard drill, we will throw a life
3 ring overboard, conduct the Williams turn and come back
4 and pick it up.

5 MR. TYRRELL: How often do you hold these
6 drills?

7 CAPTAIN RINKUS: Every month.

8 MR. TYRRELL: Okay. Is that company policy?

9 CAPTAIN RINKUS: Yes, sir.

10 MR. TYRRELL: Does the company have any --

11 CAPTAIN RINKUS: They actually pay us a half
12 hour overtime for conducting the drills.

13 MR. TYRRELL: Does the company have any,
14 provide any training for conducting drills or any other
15 safety type activities?

16 CAPTAIN RINKUS: We have on occasion, from
17 time to time, you know, the company has had some of
18 those, you know, conducting safety drills and stuff.
19 But, it is basically, you know, it is at the captain's
20 discretion.

21 MR. TYRRELL: Each captain pretty much run his
22 own program.

23 CAPTAIN RINKUS: At the present time, yes,
24 sir. Right now we are in the middle of negotiating,
25 well, it has been negotiated, to send guys down to

1 school. And have guys trained for the STCW program
2 that is going to be requirements from the Coast Guard,
3 you know, within the next few years, that every mariner
4 is going to have. And so, we are presently underway,
5 working it out, as we speak.

6 MR. TYRRELL: Do you think STCW is going to
7 affect --

8 CAPTAIN RINKUS: All mariners.

9 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Well, right now,
10 anything above 200 tons is subject in 2002, there is
11 going to be a requirement for STCW. But, we anticipate
12 that going forward, they will lower that.

13 MR. TYRRELL: Yeah, yeah, you are probably
14 right.

15 CAPTAIN RINKUS: And myself, holding a license
16 that I do, I am not looking to go backwards and
17 restrict myself to just inland -- I want to, I have
18 worked long and hard to get where I am at and I am not
19 going backwards.

20 MR. TYRRELL: All right. Are you pretty much
21 the senior captain in the --

22 CAPTAIN RINKUS: I am number three in the
23 ranks.

24 MR. TYRRELL: Number three.

25 CAPTAIN RINKUS: Yes, sir.

1 MR. TYRRELL: Can you, you know, tell me
2 something about the company in general? You know --

3 CAPTAIN RINKUS: What do you want to know? I
4 mean, I have been here for 10 years, two months, you
5 know, I am a happy camper.

6 MR. TYRRELL: Yes. Well, how many vessels
7 does the company operate?

8 CAPTAIN RINKUS: I think 22, 23. We have
9 grown in leaps and bounds, you know, since we have
10 started, absolutely.

11 MR. TYRRELL: They are all in the passenger
12 ferry business to New York?

13 CAPTAIN RINKUS: Different, different
14 locations, yes, sir. We have sometimes, we have --
15 downtown, East River, down in Hoboken, Manhattan, you
16 know, Queens. I think we are looking at Delphi(ph) in
17 the near future, to do something there.

18 MR. TYRRELL: Have you ever operated the
19 Manhattan?

20 CAPTAIN RINKUS: Yes, I have on many
21 occasions.

22 MR. TYRRELL: When was the last time that you
23 were skipper on the Manhattan?

24 CAPTAIN RINKUS: I would say a couple of
25 months ago.

1 MR. TYRRELL: Okay. When you were onboard,
2 did you have any problems with anything?

3 CAPTAIN RINKUS: No, sir.

4 MR. TYRRELL: Does the Manhattan, before the
5 fire, did it have any kind of reputation as being, what
6 was its reputation as a vessel? Where did it fall
7 within the continuum of vessels in the fleet?

8 CAPTAIN RINKUS: It was average.

9 MR. TYRRELL: Average.

10 CAPTAIN RINKUS: Yes, sir.

11 MR. TYRRELL: When --

12 CAPTAIN RINKUS: She was a little harder to
13 handle because of no keel in the stern. You know, she
14 would like slide on you, but, other than that, there
15 was no big deal. You know, it just took a little
16 getting used to. But, she did well where she was at,
17 over the Lincoln Harbor-- it was a good haul for her.

18 MR. TYRRELL: Any engineering problems that
19 you are aware of?

20 CAPTAIN RINKUS: No, sir.

21 MR. TYRRELL: Long standing?

22 CAPTAIN RINKUS: No, the Engineering
23 Department, they do an excellent job. If we have
24 problems, we get on the horn with these guys and they
25 are ASAP taking care of the issues.

1 MR. TYRRELL: Any electrical problems that you
2 know of?

3 CAPTAIN RINKUS: None that I am aware of.

4 MR. TYRRELL: How about personnel problems in
5 the company in general? Do they have many problems
6 with people being unsatisfied, dissatisfied with the
7 job and causing any kind of difficulties?

8 CAPTAIN RINKUS: Well, I think that is up to
9 the individual. And I tell guys all the time, if you
10 are not happy, you know, there is the door. I mean,
11 there is a big world out there in the marine field, you
12 know.

13 MR. TYRRELL: Yes.

14 CAPTAIN RINKUS: Nobody is forcing them to
15 stay here. You know, I represent the men as a shop
16 steward and if they have a beef, they usually come to
17 me and then we come to some kind of amicable
18 arrangement, you know, to rectify it.

19 MR. TYRRELL: So, the company is unionized?

20 CAPTAIN RINKUS: Yes, sir.

21 MR. TYRRELL: All right. Which unions do they
22 have?

23 CAPTAIN RINKUS: We're Seafarers
24 International.

25 MR. TYRRELL: Is that licensed people and non

1 licensed?

2 CAPTAIN RINKUS: For all personnel, yes, just
3 for the deck crew and who works on the boats. All
4 personnel, all --

5 MR. TYRRELL: But, I mean, that is the captain
6 and the crew?

7 CAPTAIN RINKUS: Captains and the deck hands,
8 yes, sir. I think they were trying to get the -- I
9 don't know if they succeeded or not. But, that is
10 another story.

11 No, you guys have your own union, right?

12 MR. TYRRELL: Well, I have no more questions.

13 Thank you very much.

14 CAPTAIN RINKUS: You are quite welcome.

15 (Whereupon, the interview was concluded.)